

**TESTIMONY OF TERRI DREW,
DIRECTOR OF STAMFORD YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU,
JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD, "PATHWAYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS" (P.A.S.S.)
TRUANCY PROGRAM AND SCHOOL BASED ARREST AND DIVERSION
INITIATIVE**

**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 5432
AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL-BASED ARRESTS**

MARCH 12, 2012

"Good afternoon Chairman Fox, Chairman Coleman and members of the judiciary Committee. I have a special greeting for Representative Tong, who is from Stamford. My name is Terri Drew and I am testifying in support of Raised House Bill 5432, An Act concerning School based Arrests. As Director of the Stamford Youth Service Bureau and Region One board representative of the Connecticut Youth Services Association, I have extensive involvement with the policies and practices of the juvenile justice system at the local and statewide levels."

My work is guided by, among other things, a Connecticut Statute and the Local Interagency Service Team in our court catchment area.

According to the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-19

- A youth service bureau shall be the coordinating unit of community based services to provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment, evaluation and follow-up services for at-risk youth."

Stamford is one of 11 Youth Service Bureau's to serve as the Local Interagency Service Team in our court catchment area for Department of Children and Families and Court Support Services Division. In this role

- We provide the infrastructure to engage local stakeholders, for example judges, schools, police, etc into statewide planning efforts to meet the needs of court-involved youth and families.

What we have learned through this collaborative work is:

- **We need a model of Balanced and Restorative Juvenile Justice**
- **The most critical and complicated issue is the relationship between police and schools. They need formal written agreements detailing the roles and responsibilities of police in schools.**

- **The collection, analysis and dissemination of pertinent data are necessary to implement changes.**
- **The School to Prison Pipeline is real in Connecticut.**
 - Zero tolerance policies automatically impose severe punishments regardless of circumstances.
 - Too many young people are being arrested at school, including children as young as 10 years old.
 - Many arrests at school occur for low-level, non-violent offenses such as breach of peace, disorderly conduct, trespassing and insubordination.
 - Young people are being arrested at school for offenses that occurred in the community, not on school grounds.
 - Black and Hispanic students are more likely to be arrested at school.

Arresting young people at school harms children, families and communities:

- **Most juvenile justice-involved youth never graduate from high school and arrested children usually offend again.** They continue to face barriers stemming from school-based arrests including denials of student loans, public housing, employment and occupational licenses.
- In a recent article, "Federal data show racial gaps in school arrests," by Donna St. George, Published March 6, 2012, Matt Cregor of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund says, "the stakes for students are high. **The harms of suspension pale in comparison to the harms of arrest, a first time arrest doubles the chances a student will drop out. A first time court appearance quadruples them!**"

Stamford is one of three communities with Manchester and Willimantic, that recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement between police and schools as part of our School Based Arrest Reduction and Diversion Collaborative, spearheaded by Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance. The process of producing a formal written working agreement was excruciating and took more than three years to get both stakeholders to the table.

I am pleased to Support Raised Bill No. 5432, An Act Concerning School-Based Arrests. This bill will require the creation of formal written agreements detailing the roles and responsibilities of police officers stationed in schools, similar to agreements that have been used nationally and here in Connecticut **to reduce inappropriate arrests; and This bill will provide communities with better data about the number of school-based arrests** in each school, and specific to groups of students who are more likely to be arrested, It will provide the structure for Connecticut

communities to create interventions to **keep kids in school and out of the juvenile justice system.**

Connecticut cannot afford to wait any longer. We need to close our School to Prison Pipeline. Raised Bill No.5432, An Act Concerning School Based Arrests is a critical first step to implement models for change based on Balanced and Restorative Juvenile Justice.